

VZCZCXRO2893
PP RUEHCD RUEHGD RUEHHO RUEHMC RUEHNG RUEHTM
DE RUEHLP #0185/01 0281306
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 281306Z JAN 08
FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6311
INFO RUEHZI/WHA POSTS COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 LA PAZ 000185

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BL](#) [OAS](#)
SUBJECT: BOLIVIA: INDIGENOUS OUTREACH

REF: SECSTATE 4241

11. (U) Summary: The U.S. Mission in Bolivia has for many years reached out to Bolivia's indigenous communities through a series of innovative and successful programs. USAID Bolivia has always focused its significant assistance programs on the poorest and marginalized groups, which are usually indigenous. The Public Affairs Section (PAS) attempts to ensure that indigenous communities benefit from all PAS programs. The Embassy and USAID have also begun initiatives to include indigenous Bolivians in Mission operations, with two ongoing indigenous internship programs and hiring indigenous experts into key professional positions. MILGROUP medical missions treat indigenous Bolivians, and the Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) has programs aimed at preventing drug-use by indigenous youth. End Summary.

- - - - -
USAID: Helping Poor and Indigenous Bolivians
- - - - -

12. (U) To highlight the USG's role in providing increased opportunities for Bolivia's traditionally-marginalized indigenous communities, USAID identified key messages and ramped up its public outreach strategy to ensure that the messages were being delivered throughout the country. Averaging two per week, USAID events communicate positive messages on how USG assistance is effectively helping the Bolivian people, in particular the poor and indigenous. For example, at one school event in the indigenous city of El Alto, the Ambassador showed how nutritious USG-supported Integrated Alternative Development fruit reaches over 180,000 students twice per week in La Paz and El Alto. USAID also helped create PROSALUD, a health service provider that currently serves more than 600,000 poor, mostly indigenous, Bolivians each year.

13. (U) To publicize post's assistance programs, in 2007 USAID organized five "Project Fairs" to deepen the understanding of USG assistance programs in Bolivia, highlighting the programs that USAID, NAS, PAS, MILGROUP and the Peace Corps carry out across the country. At each Project Fair, project beneficiaries (typically indigenous) come from the far reaches of the Amazon Basin, Altiplano communities and Santa Cruz lowlands to describe firsthand how USG assistance has benefited their families and communities. In one particularly successful outreach program, USAID and PAS brought together USAID partners from all over Bolivia to present a project fair for participants of the April 2007 Organization of American States (OAS) working group in La Paz. Through this fair, USAID and PAS were able to demonstrate valuable 'in the field' cooperation between the USG and indigenous communities in Bolivia. OAS participants were able to learn more about various projects and had the opportunity to buy partner-organization products.

14. (U) Through its Integrated Alternative Development program, USAID funds annual workshops conducted by PAS for

indigenous community radio journalists to improve local capacity to report on alternative development projects and their impact on local communities. USAID also funds program segments produced by an independent radio journalist that highlight the benefits of USG assistance to rural communities.

15. (U) USAID also initiated a highly-successful indigenous intern program, selecting exceptional young indigenous leaders to work at USAID for six month periods. These interns gain valuable work experience while also learning more about USAID and its programs that directly help indigenous communities in Bolivia.

MILGROUP: Military Medicine for Marginalized Majority

16. (SBU) The MILGROUP focuses its humanitarian assistance programs, totaling over \$3M for FY07, on outreach to populations with little access to basic needs, often indigenous Bolivians. The grassroots support earned through these programs provides the USG with significant long-term goodwill among the neediest populations. During 2007, the MILGROUP coordinated and executed seven Medical Readiness Exercises (MEDRETES) in towns, cities, and along rivers in Bolivia, providing care to some of the country's most remote and under-served populations. The MEDRETES totaled over \$1.2 million and treated from five to ten thousand patients per MEDRETE. In these same marginalized, mostly-indigenous communities, MILGROUP has funded \$2.3 million dollars in humanitarian assistance, including four medical clinics, five water storage and treatment facilities, two community centers, a disaster relief warehouse and supplies, a school, two wells, and a national Avian Influenza tracking program.

LA PAZ 00000185 002 OF 003

MILGROUP also coordinated over \$600,000 in Denton Amendment U.S. Air Force support for NGO donations, including hospital supplies, school materials, and other U.S. citizen donations.

NAS: No to Drugs, Yes to Indigenous Empowerment

17. (U) The Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) has an active demand-reduction campaign that reaches thousands of at-risk indigenous students, mostly through the DARE program. In coordination with the Rural Interdiction Police, NAS sponsors an annual soccer tournament for indigenous youth in the Yungas coca-growing area and provides three annual soccer-academy scholarships for indigenous youth from the Yungas. NAS also supports the "School for Life", which works with 30 student leaders in Santa Cruz to build social skills in underprivileged youth. A pilot Narcotics Affairs Section and Public Affairs Section project starting in 2008 will invite an art teacher/urban youth expert to live in an indigenous community for three months to use art lessons to reach at-risk indigenous kids before they start drug use.

Public Affairs: Indigenous Participation in Every Program

18. (U) The Public Affairs Section (PAS) produces in-house indigenous language (Aymara, Quechua, and Guarani) radio programs to highlight the Embassy's programs and provide the U.S. perspective on key events within Bolivia and around the world. The programs are produced three times a week and are distributed to over 200 rural community radio stations.

19. (U) PAS has a large number of programs targeting young indigenous audiences. PAS works closely with Bi-national Centers in order to reach 15-18 year-olds, especially with English language instruction and cultural outreach. In the last year, PAS more than tripled the number of scholarships for indigenous and Afro-Bolivian students from 80 to 263.

PAS supports several "youth Ambassador" programs in which indigenous high school students and other young indigenous leaders have the opportunity to go the United States for two weeks or more. In conjunction with the Martin Luther King scholarship program, PAS's "College Horizons" projects provides two years of English language scholarship and pairs participants with former International Visitor, Fulbright or other scholarship recipients for mentoring. Participants are helped in the college application and scholarship application process, and the program pays for college entrance test fees.

Embassy Bolivia's Fulbright program also actively seeks indigenous participants, supported by PAS's English-language scholarships, as more potential indigenous Fulbright participants are close to having the required level of English (currently two of Bolivia's Fulbright scholarship recipients in the United States are indigenous.)

¶10. (U) Through the 'Winter Institute for Bolivian Indigenous Leaders' (the 'Study of U.S. Institutes for Student Leaders Program'), ten Bolivian university students of indigenous background are selected to go to the United States to participate in a five-week academic seminar and educational travel program, enhancing their leadership potential and their familiarity with the United States and U.S. values. Two former Winter Institute graduates (and Embassy indigenous interns) have gone on to create a series of workshops for over 1,500 indigenous Bolivian students. Their "Breaking Stereotypes" workshops reached 20 to 30 students at a time with discussions of U.S. democracy, government, and the role of the Embassy in Bolivia, with Embassy officers often taking part. Participants had the opportunity to question the two former interns about their experiences in the United States and at the Embassy. Many of the indigenous youth attending the workshop were from tough inner-city schools and had never had the chance to meet or talk with an American, or even someone who had visited the United States.

¶11. (SBU) With PAS, U.S. conservationist Jon Kohl promoted eco-tourism as a tool for environmental protection and economic development. In addition to lectures around the country, Kohl conducted a four-day workshop in an indigenous community in Madidi National Park (where USAID is also working with the indigenous community). Participants of this workshop plan to use the course material to improve ecotourism projects in two Mission-supported Bolivian nature preserves.

¶12. (U) Recent Cultural programs included two hip-hop groups and a group of Native American dancers: the hip-hop groups were chosen to appeal to young (mostly-indigenous) urban audiences, while the Native American dancers appealed to indigenous audiences in Cochabamba, La Paz, Batallas (an

LA PAZ 00000185 003 OF 003

Aymara city in the Altiplano), and Santa Cruz. PAS also recently organized a visit to the United States for six indigenous members of the El Alto orchestra (note: El Alto is Bolivia's largest indigenous city and one of President Evo Morales' areas of strongest support. End note.) The young indigenous musicians visited Juilliard, the Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall, participating in workshops and educational events. One of the U.S. teachers in this program will soon visit Bolivia as a U.S. speaker. In addition, the Ambassador's invitation of over 500 orphans and street kids from El Alto (mostly indigenous) to a professional soccer game made the front page of the only newspaper dedicated to the 800,000 indigenous residents of El Alto.

¶13. (U) PAS also hosted a successful DVC on Native American history, inviting indigenous community leaders, former scholarship participants and other indigenous observers to also participate in two follow-up roundtables. During the roundtables, participants were able to comment on what they had learned from the DVC and provide their own insights into parallels between the history of U.S. Native American and Bolivian indigenous groups.

- - - -
Comment
- - - -

¶14. (SBU) One of Post's top priorities is to continue to reach out to Bolivia's historically overlooked and under-served indigenous population. Opportunities abound in a country where the majority of citizens identify themselves as either mestizo or indigenous, depending on the survey. Post's programs for indigenous populations have been very well-received, generating good results and good will throughout the country. Demand exceeds our ability to supply indigenous outreach: we could support even more successful programs with additional resources.

¶15. (SBU) Because of the positive response Post's indigenous outreach programs garner, these programs could prove hard for Bolivian officials to attack (for example, anti-USAID rhetoric is less convincing when the Bolivian public can see that USAID supports indigenous women entrepreneurs in El Alto or provides scholarships to poor, indigenous youth.) As President Morales capitalizes on his status as Bolivia's first indigenous president, indigenous identity and indigenous inclusion will become even more prominent issues. President Morales may find it difficult to criticize programs that directly benefit his largest base of support: indigenous Bolivians. While focusing on delivering real benefits to Bolivian indigenous communities, we will therefore also seek to counteract anti-USG rhetoric with the positive truth: that the USG and the U.S. people continue to support Bolivia's poor, marginalized, and indigenous citizens. End comment.

GOLDBERG